

The Experience of Women Students
at the University of Kansas
1866-1890



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ABSTRACT

This project explores the issue of coeducation from the mid to late nineteenth century and the experience of women students. Specifically, this project details the experience of women students at the University of Kansas (KU) in the nineteenth century—from its beginning, in 1866, to 1890.

The Introduction and Review of Literature sections discuss the beginnings of coeducation, as well as the experiences of women students on the campuses of other colleges and universities. This information is included in order to establish a foundation as to how women students were included and, in some instances, excluded at other schools. This literature also is utilized in an attempt to compare the experiences of women students at KU to the experiences of women at other colleges.

To fully achieve an understanding of the experience of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890, the following historical documents were used in this research endeavor: yearbooks, student newspapers, student organization bylaws and meeting minutes, graduation records, commencement programs and related material, City of Lawrence, Kansas newspapers, personal accounts, diaries and autobiographies, and other University-related documents (Chancellor correspondence and speeches).

Following the presentation of the research findings, is a discussion which relates the similarities and contrasts of the experiences of women students at KU to women students at other colleges and universities of the time period.

Thus, a full understanding of the phenomena of coeducation at KU and the experiences of its women students can be understood and compared to the experiences of women at other schools.

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INTRODUCTION

As young women and men graduate from high school, many will decide whether they want to further their education and attend a college or university. Often times, after they make the decision to do so, many options and questions begin to take form: What institution should they attend? What will they pursue as a major? How will they pay for the education? and What type of experiences will they have at college? These questions are important to any person deciding to attend an institution of higher learning, however many women may not realize that, had they lived in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, they would not have had the option of entering college to earn a degree. In fact, during this time period, the doors of higher education were closed to women. Women were barred from pursuing a college degree because the societal opinion of the time viewed them as being intellectually inferior and incapable of achieving at the university level. Henry Phillip Tappan, President of the University of Michigan, remarked that coeducation — the inclusion of women in the classroom with male students — would lead to large numbers of women enrolling in college, thus preventing the creation of true intellectual universities.¹

The doors of higher education began to open slightly in 1834 when Oberlin College of Ohio began under a charter that allowed for the education of women and men. In 1837, four women were admitted to Oberlin College and in 1841 three of these women received degrees.² With this step taken by Oberlin College, coeducation at the higher education

level was initiated. However, not many colleges of the period decided to follow coeducational philosophies, and coeducational policies were adopted by only a handful of state universities: the University of Iowa in 1855, the University of Wisconsin in 1863, with Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, and California following.³ Frederick Rudolph, in his book *The American College & University: A History*, noted that before the Civil War, fewer than half a dozen schools had adopted coeducational policies.⁴

Coeducation did not become a widespread reality until 1862 when the first Morrill Act was passed. Under this act, land grant universities were established in each state with a mandate that they follow coeducational admission policies. As a result, women finally were allowed to achieve a college degree. However the Western and Midwestern state institutions were quicker to adopt coeducational policies than those in the South and East; many believe this happened because women helped settle the Western states and had proven themselves, thus were given the opportunity to have the same education as men.⁵ Coeducation was advanced further in 1890 with the passage of the second Morrill Act. This act reinforced the ideals of coeducation in that it required all institutions of higher learning, that received or desired federal aid, to follow policies of open access or provide separate but equal facilities.

Thus coeducation became an ideal practiced by many colleges and universities, however the manner in which these schools chose to include women varied greatly. Some institutions and their male students openly accepted the new policies, while others allowed women as students but adopted discriminatory rules toward the women students. At some schools, women students were not given the same options and freedoms as their male counterparts and some institutions barred women from pursuing certain areas of

study, while encouraging them to pursue studies and careers that were acceptable for women. Indeed, even at Oberlin College, women studied what was called the "Ladies' Course," although after 1841 they could take "men's courses" if they wanted. Moreover, women students at Oberlin were not allowed to deliver graduation addresses or other public speeches and performed domestic work for the college.⁶ Some schools prohibited women students from participating in certain extracurricular clubs and activities, while at other institutions, administrators refused to correct male students when they mistreated their female counterparts.

Lynn Gordon in her work, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, commented about the role of women students on campus:

Women students were not welcome in men's campus organizations; rather than accept exclusion from university life, they formed their own groups. At all times, however, men students dominated coeducational institutions, holding exclusive control over publications, student government, competition with other schools, debate, and campus politics. The growing importance of men's athletics, particularly football, further diminished the status of women on campus.⁷

Ultimately, coeducation was accepted and managed differently from institution to institution, and at some schools women had to be extremely brave and steadfast in order to achieve a college degree. Furthermore, on many campuses, women students not only had to adjust to discriminatory rules but also acknowledge that some administrators, faculty, and male students did not want them on campus.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

In September of 1866, the University of Kansas (KU) opened its doors to students interested in obtaining a college education — this was approximately four years after the first Morrill Act which created land grant universities. KU was not the land grant institution for the State of Kansas. However both the constitution for the State and the University's charter called for equal education for both sexes, so KU nonetheless admitted women as students. Clifford Griffin, the author of *The University of Kansas: A History*, wrote that the University's charter called for:

....both male and female branches; each year the regents were to allot enough money to establish and maintain the female branch. The buildings for the two branches were to be separate, and female students might be taught exclusively by women. Although the existence of the female branch meant that women could matriculate on equal terms with men — the charter did not say so directly — it was unclear whether each department and its subdivisions were to be duplicated in the two branches, or whether the female branch was to be merely adjunct to the rest of the institution.⁸

This never occurred -- KU allowed women students to study in the same classrooms as the male students. Although Griffin's work is an excellent source to refer to when researching the history of KU, it does not provide a detailed accounting of how many women students were enrolled in the initial years; what sort of experiences they had; or if any restrictions applied to them as they studied on campus.

With this information in mind, I have researched the experience of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890. This time period was chosen because it allows for a thorough accounting of the experiences of women students in the initial years of KU's history. Moreover, in choosing the time period of 1866 to 1890, this allows for further research on women students after 1890. The questions for this research project are:

- How can the membership of KU's women students in campus organizations be characterized?
- What fields of study did women students at KU pursue? Were there some fields of study closed to women students?
- To what extent did treatment, by the KU administrators and faculty, of female students differ from that of male students?
- What was the overall campus climate toward women students and their activities and studies at KU?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is significant in that it provides an historical account of the experiences of women students at KU. Furthermore, in providing information related to how other colleges and universities dealt with coeducation and women students, a comparison of KU to other schools is presented. This study also may encourage students to research other histories related to KU — women students and their experiences after 1890; the Women's Student Government Association; the experience of black students; the influence and subsequent fall of the literary societies; and the experiences of female faculty could be examined as well. Most importantly, however, as women now account for the majority of students attending college today,⁹ our historical roots should be examined in order to determine how we started and how we progressed to our current state.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Historical analyses related to the experiences of women college students from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century comprise the foundation of the literature chosen for this project. Lynn Gordon's *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, Barbara Miller Solomon's *In the Company of Educated Women*, and *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* by Dorothy Gies McGuigan provide detailed information related to how specific universities dealt with the issue of coeducation and women students. Additionally, other literature which discusses coeducation and the manner in which other colleges and universities dealt with women students is included.

It should be noted that this literature review relies heavily on the works of Lynn Gordon and Barbara Miller Solomon, as these sources provide thorough accountings of coeducation in general; the attitudes toward women students on specific campuses; and are the models on which this project is based.

Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era by Lynn Gordon is an examination of women college students and their experiences from 1890 to 1920. Specifically, Ms. Gordon details the campus climates at the University of California - Berkeley, the University of Chicago, Vassar College, and Sophie Newcomb and Agnes Scott Colleges. In this work, Ms. Gordon discusses how coeducation was received on these college campuses and how the women students were treated.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY

At the University of California - Berkeley, Gordon tells of how the women students in the late 1800s had to create their own clubs and activities because they often were excluded from joining the male-controlled clubs. Although women were allowed to take classes with male students, many male students and administrators on campus did not agree with the policy of coeducation. Professor Edward Clapp, in an address to an alumni audience, said that coeducation would result in a "poor and feeble hybrid which is unsatisfactory to the one side as to the other."¹⁰ The president of the University, Benjamin Wheeler, was not any more supportive — he encouraged women students to form their own organizations and prepare themselves for postgraduate domesticity, not for a role in public affairs or teaching.¹¹ Consequently, women students at Berkeley found they were excluded from being officers of classes, intercollegiate competition and, at times, scholastic honors such as Phi Beta Kappa. Lillian Moller Gilbreth was denied a Phi Beta Kappa key because it was thought it would be of more use to a male student.¹² In the *Blue and Gold*, Berkeley's yearbook, photos of women students were placed at the back of the book in an unmarked section, thus providing an idea of how the campus viewed its women students. Additionally, the yearbooks' literature sections included jokes about the incompatibility of intelligence and attractiveness in women.¹³ Discrimination also occurred outside the classroom; at football games, women students sat in a separate section and performed their own cheers and songs.¹⁴

However, as a result of being excluded from many activities, women students formed their own organizations and became a force to be dealt with by the male students and university administration. Additionally, the women students obtained assistance

from sources outside of the University — primarily from Phoebe Hearst, the wife of millionaire George Hearst. In 1900, Mrs. Hearst donated the entertainment pavilion of her home to the University so that a women's center could be established. The top floor was used as a gymnasium, thus allowing the women students the opportunity to take physical education classes. Other portions of the building were used by women students for club meetings and social functions. Mrs. Hearst later gave more money for a women's basketball court and swimming pool.¹⁵

Although women students formed their own clubs and consequently developed a fairly strong power base on campus, there were differences in the manner in which black female students were included in the female organizations. Gordon notes that for the most part, black female students did not have a role in the women's campus community. Gordon gives an account of Ida Jackson who, as a result of exclusion from campus life, was instrumental in forming a club for black students — the Braithwaite Club, as well as Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.¹⁶ Although white female students were able to advance somewhat with a separatist strategy, the black women students on campus found this did not work — the yearbook refused to publish their club photos, and the YMCA pool, which sometimes was used by white female students, was closed to all black students.¹⁷

In the early 1900s, the women students began to voice opposition to many of the inequalities that existed on campus and consequently challenge the male students; the women students had built a solid power base as a result of their exclusion. Women students sought more involvement in class affairs and more publicity for their own athletic events.¹⁸ By 1918, women students at Berkeley accounted for 53 percent of the student population,¹⁹ and Gordon suggests that with this increase in numbers, the women began

to work toward abolishing the discriminating traditions — they sat on the Senior bench, used the men's swimming pool when their pool was closed for repairs, and used campus stairs and lawns which had formerly been closed to them. Many male students did not take these actions lightly; their response was to gather on well-travelled campus paths and make lewd remarks to the female students as they walked by.²⁰

Gordon suggests that the strong power base created by the women students was diminished by World War I when an overall mood of conservatism swept the nation.²¹ For the most part, Gordon paints a controversial picture of how women students at Berkeley were treated by the male students and university administration. Gordon suggests that, in establishing their own groups, women students countered the discriminatory rules and traditions to some extent but were unable to completely get the rules abolished and achieve widespread acceptance.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Ms. Gordon also describes the campus climate and coeducation at the University of Chicago which opened in 1892. For the most part, the University of Chicago began with a positive attitude toward women students — this due primarily to the efforts of the first president, William Rainey Harper, who was committed to allowing coeducation at the new university. To this end, he hired many prominent women as faculty, in addition to creating a Dean of Women position which initially was filled by Alice Freeman Palmer, a former President of Wellesley College.²² After Palmer left, Marion Talbot took the position where she remained until 1925 when she retired.²³ With Talbot's assistance, the women students were accepted and encouraged by the majority of the administration and male students at the University of Chicago.

As one of Talbot's primary goals was to have the women students involved in college life, she encouraged the University to build female residence halls so the women would develop a stronger sense of campus community.²⁴ For the women students who chose not to live on campus, Talbot created an assortment of women's clubs in an attempt to bring the female students together.²⁵ With the help of Talbot and University officials, the women were accepted, and the attitude at the University of Chicago toward women students was favorable. The student newspaper even wrote that "a university without women would be a misnomer."²⁶ Women students were allowed to join activities sponsored by the school, and the student newspaper gave attention to the social life of the women's residence halls.²⁷ There were some differences though — women were prescribed to certain offices within the clubs they joined. In athletics, Gordon contends that male students at the University had more opportunities than their female counterparts. Although a Women's Athletic Association existed, it only sponsored events between the classes, and the administration believed it improper for the University's female athletes to compete against other schools. Furthermore, it was not until 1907, that women students finally got their own gymnasium and consequently had regular use of an athletic facility.²⁸

Although the University of Chicago was more accepting of black students than the University of California - Berkeley, Gordon notes that its YWCA's attempts to have interracial picnics and luncheons proved unsuccessful.²⁹ Gordon gives no detailed accounting of the exclusion of black students at the University of Chicago, except to mention an account of how, in 1907, the fraternities and club students humiliated a black woman student by claiming that she passed herself off as a white student in order to join a secret society. The faculty and administration responded in support of the

student, Cecilia Johnson, and noted that she had made no secret of her race and even associated with other black students on campus.³⁰

For the most part, the male students at Chicago did not think that female participation at the University would hinder their own performance, nor did they believe that the women students had to minimize their intelligence for social acceptability.³¹ Consequently, the climate in the beginning years was fairly favorable toward the women students.

However, in 1902 the faculty became disturbed with the influence the women had on campus and Chicago's Civil War began.³² Many situations led to this event: Women students made up 56 percent of the Phi Beta Kappa membership; women students outnumbered men in the Junior College; and women students were developing a strong power base as a result of their successful clubs. Consequently, the faculty, administration, and trustees feared that women students would overrun the University. Ultimately, they chose to limit the influence of the women students, and subsequently many classes in the Junior College were segregated.³³ After the events of 1902, the women students and women faculty experienced much difficulty trying to regain the status they had prior to this time. Gordon suggests this may have been due to increases in the number of male students enrolling in the University, as well as a rise in the popularity of men's athletics.³⁴

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The experiences of women students at the University of Michigan are detailed by Dorothy Gies McGuigan in her book, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan*. At the University of Michigan, coeducation began in February of

1870, when Madelon Stockwell began taking classes. On that first day, Miss Stockwell was the target of curious stares, pointing fingers, and whispers from her male counterparts, faculty, and residents of Ann Arbor.³⁵ As she left the campus, she found the male students lined up on both sides of the Diagonal Walk "hoping to stare her out of countenance."³⁶ She later commented that her entrance examinations were longer and more severe than those given to the prospective male students.³⁷ On that day in 1870, Madelon Stockwell was admitted with thirty-three other women; they comprised only 3 percent of the total enrollment at the University.³⁸ Ms. McGuigan suggests that the women were not well received as students — even the townspeople of Ann Arbor treated the women with coldness and hostility. The ministers of Ann Arbor preached the evils of coeducation, and women students found it difficult to find rooms to rent. The faculty were no more accepting of the new students — in some classrooms, women students were given the title of "Mr." when they were spoken to in class.³⁹

However the president, James Burrill Angell, who came to the University one year after coeducation began at Michigan, staunchly defended the principles of coeducation. Ms. McGuigan contends that President Angell worked vigorously to ensure that women students were given the same rights as the male students. Moreover, he was often called upon to give speeches in support of coeducation and the ability of women to achieve at the university level.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, Ms. McGuigan's work gives little evidence as to how women students participated in extracurricular clubs and activities. In terms of scholastic honors, the University of Michigan established a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 1907. During that first year 8 students were chosen -- 3 were women. The next year, out of 24 students chosen, 13 were women.⁴¹ This was accomplished in spite of the fact that women were the minority

in the Literary Department in this years.⁴² Ms. McGuigan's account of President Angell and his acceptance of coeducational ideals and support of the women students provides some explanation as to how women students were included at the University of Michigan.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Amy Hague has outlined the experience of women students at the University of Wisconsin. Specifically, Ms. Hague describes the University of Wisconsin as being positive toward women students — this primarily due to the efforts of the President, John Bascom who began his tenure one year after coeducation was initiated at Wisconsin.⁴³ Although women students had to form their own clubs and activities, Ms. Hague maintains that this might have assisted the women; as women adjusted to collegiate life, they did not have to contend with competition from male students. Furthermore, although the women were always told that they were different from their male counterparts, they were encouraged and expected to be leaders on campus and in society after graduation.⁴⁴ At Wisconsin, coeducation officially began in 1871, however it was not until 1877 that the classes were integrated. Prior to this time, the women students attended classes at a separate female branch of the institution.⁴⁵

As with other schools, discrepancies existed within the realm of extracurricular activities. The options for participation in extracurricular life for women students were more limited than the offering for the male students — particularly in the area of literary and debating societies. These societies were a strong component of Wisconsin's extracurricular life. For the most part, the male students had their own societies and the women students had separate versions. *Castalian* and its competitor *Laurea* were literary

societies specifically made up of women students. Ms. Hague contends that the women's literary societies were important to the women students because the clubs offered them the opportunity to develop their debating and oratorical skills. In addition, the clubs proved to be a very popular form of involvement for women students; the two clubs even competed against each other for members. Whenever the clubs participated in exhibitions and competitions, the women students usually received honors.⁴⁶ However the women's literary societies routinely were excluded from participating in the Joint Debate — an event held annually with the men's literary societies.⁴⁷ Some exclusion carried over to athletics as well. Ms. Hague mentions that during this time period physical education classes and organized athletics were not offered to female students because the women students did not have a gymnasium of their own. They were, however, allowed to use the men's gymnasium for a few hours each week.⁴⁸

Although women had much success with their literary societies, the clubs and opportunities for male students clearly outnumbered those for female students. In 1885 there were 4 women's organizations, 22 men's organizations, and 6 with open membership. In 1900, little had changed — there were 11 organizations for women students, 38 for men students, and 12 clubs with open membership.⁴⁹ Consequently, as with other schools, male students dominated the extracurricular life.

ACCEPTANCE OF COEDUCATIONAL IDEALS

In her work, *In the Company of Educated Women*, Barbara Miller Solomon discusses the history of women students in higher education. Initially, Ms. Solomon tells of the three generations of women students in higher education and describes the type of women

who attended college in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first generation (1860s to 1880s) was a time when women students thought of themselves as "pioneers enlarging the female sphere, but she still defined herself as a true women, pure and pious at least if not always obedient and domestic." In the second generation (1890s to 1900s) women students still considered themselves pioneers but they possessed "an expansive spirit; mentally and physically vigorous like a Gibson girl, she called herself a new woman." The third generation (1910s to 1920s) had a more sophisticated woman who was responsive to "progressive causes of social reform but also flouting conventional mores." Ms. Solomon goes on to describe the first generation college woman as "serious, single minded and conscientious, they hid neither purposefulness nor anxiety." The women students of the second and third generations are mentioned differently: They "let themselves appear to be at college for the pursuit of happiness."⁵⁰

Ms. Solomon suggests that women students at coeducational institutions were second-class citizens because, typically, the male students' attitudes "depended on the mores of the particular institution."⁵¹ Ms. Solomon also mentions that separate activities existed at most coeducational schools; this may have resulted as a defense against the hostilities of the male students or the natural preference for segregated bonding.⁵²

According to Solomon, women students took advantage of opportunities to join literary societies, debating clubs, drama clubs, and journalism activities during this time period. However, for the most part, the literary societies and debate clubs were separate in nature — the male students had their clubs and women students had societies of their own. In regards to debate, women students never really participated in or with the male clubs, and competitions rarely were integrated. The only niche within the student club structure

in which male and female students were often brought together as participants and spectators was drama. In the late nineteenth century, Solomon contends that drama was the "thing to do" on college campuses. Writing, directing, and acting were activities in which both female and male students participated.⁵³

In terms of inclusion in athletics, Solomon contends that women's sports developed more slowly at coeducational schools than at women's colleges.⁵⁴ Although women wanted to be involved in physical exercise and sports, they often did not have the facilities or coaches to assist them in this endeavor. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, it was not until Phoebe Hearst's donation that a women's gymnasium was established at the University of California-Berkeley and women students could participate in some form of athletics. Often times, the female students' role in athletics was that of spectators at the male events because their own events attracted far less attention.

Ms. Solomon provides many detailed examples of how women students were treated. One such example shows how the University of Missouri, which began admitting women in 1870, dealt with women students. At Missouri, the women students and their acceptance were restricted. Solomon writes that:

It was 1871 before women were admitted to all classes, and even later before they had full use of the library and permission to attend chapel with the men. In one administration they were "marched to class" with teachers as guards at the front and rear. In another, uniforms were made compulsory in order to distinguish female students from other women in town. The resistance of Southerners in the town made itself felt in the particularly military supervision of the first coeds.⁵⁵

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz also documents how women students were treated on college campuses in her book, *Campus Life*. Horowitz writes that, when women entered the university environment, "the college men on campus put the women students into the

outsiders' mold, and to a large extent that is where they fit."⁵⁶ She also suggests that, in the initial years of coeducation, it took a courageous woman to attend a coeducational institution.⁵⁷ Horowitz provides an account given by Olive Anderson who attended the University of Michigan in the 1870s. Ms. Anderson wrote in her autobiography of how a freshman woman was pushed against the banister resulting in a nosebleed — the male students who witnessed this incident ignored the woman and offered no help or sympathy.⁵⁸

Clifford Griffin's book, *The University of Kansas: A History*, provides some general information related to women students at KU. Of the extracurricular life, he writes that the Orophilian Literary Society initially excluded females as members, however due to competition from the Oread Literary Society -- which had open membership -- the Orophilians rethought their membership restrictions and decided to include women.⁵⁹ Additionally, since the University lacked dormitories, many students lived off-campus in boarding houses, and as a result, dining clubs were formed.⁶⁰ In providing an idea of how female students at KU were viewed in the late 1800s, Griffin offers an account printed in a student newspaper, the *Kansas University Weekly*, in 1896:

Among the females was a type whose only redeeming quality was that she was a fairly good student. She was pretty of face, but with beauty went vanity, and so she passed "present, precious moments basking in the sunshine, while those about her are making serious preparation for their life work.....She is alas! a butter-fly of fashion." She shunned girls outside her own social set. "This girl composite is disliked by the majority of people who know her, envied or tolerated by those of her own social clique, and admired perhaps by passing strangers and a few cholly boys who let their hearts rule them — body and soul." Yet there was still time for her to repent her folly and make a noble woman of herself — like her opposite, who had all the womanly graces and brains besides. "She is quiet and reserved but has opinions of her own upon all subjects of importance," and if she lacked the other's "broad culture" she was her scholarly equal or superior. "She is polite, kind, congenial and ever ready to assist those who need assistance if the means is within her power. She has the purity of Puritan Priscilla and greater tact and independence. She is altogether a typical Kansas girl of whom the state and perhaps some day the nation will be proud."⁶¹

For the most part, the literature related to women students in higher education in the nineteenth century details similar experiences. Although women finally were included in higher education, in no way did this mean that the administration, faculty, and male students accepted them. Furthermore, although there were many college and university presidents who openly accepted the ideals of coeducation, this did not necessarily guarantee that a positive campus climate existed for the women students.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative, historical analysis in that primary and secondary sources were utilized in order to understand and interpret the experience of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890. Although the focus of this research is 1866 to 1890, the period of the 1890s and early 1900s is considered in summary form in order to achieve an understanding of the trends related to the inclusion of women students at KU.

Archival documents related to KU's history, which are housed at Spencer Library's University Archives division, were used in this research. The types of historical documentation used include:

KU Yearbooks — 1866 to 1890: Although this source was not published regularly, it yielded information related to club and organization membership; number of women in graduating classes; fields of study pursued by women students; and officership in classes and campus organizations.

KU Student Newspapers — 1866 to 1890: This source provided information related to the overall campus attitude toward women students, as well as their involvement in campus activities.

KU Commencement Programs — 1866 to 1890: This source provided information related to the number of women who graduated from KU, their fields of study, as well as their inclusion in commencement activities.

KU Student Organization/Club Bylaws — 1866 to 1890: These documents were used in order to determine how women students were included in the membership of campus clubs and organizations.

Personal Diaries, Papers and Autobiographies: Personal diaries, papers, and autobiographies from women who attended KU from 1866 to 1890 were used. These sources provided invaluable information in that they gave actual accounts from women who attended KU during this time period.

City of Lawrence Newspapers — 1866 to 1890: This source provided information related to commencement speeches given by women students. This source was located at the Lawrence Public Library.

The aforementioned documents were utilized in answering the research questions and determining the experiences of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890. Furthermore, information brought forth in the literature review will be considered in order to determine how the experiences of women students at KU compare to experiences of women students at other colleges and universities.

LIMITATIONS

In regards to limitations related to this research project, the most apparent limitation is the chosen time period -- for which much archival information is incomplete. This, in turn, created a lack of time continuity with most of the chosen research sources. Although yearbooks were utilized in this research, they did not exist for much of the chosen time period; there were only five yearbooks published from 1866 to 1890 (1874, 1882, 1883, 1884, and 1889). However, student newspapers compensated for the lack of continuity in the yearbooks. With the newspapers as well, there were gaps in the time of publication. Students did not begin publishing newspapers until the 1872-73 school year with the *Nature Observer*, and although publication of student newspapers was consistent after this year, the collections in the archives are not complete and gaps exist in this area. This limitation can be applied to other sources as well: KU Commencement programs from the early years are incomplete; most of the student organization bylaws and membership lists do not exist; and there are not many personal accounts from women who attended KU during this time period.

However, on the positive side, most of the early student newspapers focused heavily on the business and activities of the student organizations, for which there were only a scattering in the first two decades of the University's history. Thus, student organization membership and the inclusion of women was obtained from the student newspapers. Moreover, as much of the early commencement information does not include the speeches given at the ceremonies by women students, City of Lawrence newspapers were utilized. There also was

a lack of personal diaries and papers from women who attended KU in this time period, however to compensate for this limitation the *Graduate Magazine*, which provided many recollections by alumnae from the early years of KU, was used. Furthermore, an autobiography written by a prominent alumna was located and the chapter detailing her experiences at KU was used.

Because there is a lack of published or archived information within the time period of 1866 until the first commencement, first yearbook, or first student newspaper, the *Graduate Magazine* was utilized in an attempt to understand the students' collegiate experiences in the initial years of KU's history.

While reading this research, it should be kept in mind that many more women attended KU than are accounted for in the graduation statistics. Many times, because of economic or personal situations and transfer, women attended KU but did not graduate. So, for the sake of continuity, this research did not review enrollment records, rather the focus was on women students who graduated from the University.

Moreover, although this research focuses on the experiences of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890, it should be recognized that these findings may not apply to black women students at KU during this time period. Originally, this research endeavor planned to answer the question of whether the experiences of black women students differed from those of white women students, however this is a subject for another research project.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH

On September 12, 1866 the University of Kansas was formally dedicated. Hannah Oliver (class of 1874) remembered that day some fifty-nine years later when she gave a speech to the freshman students at KU's freshman orientation services. She spoke of how fifty-five students attended the dedication in 1866 with the members of the first faculty. After the dedication, two members of the faculty — F.H. Snow and D.H. Robinson — met with the new student body.¹ Most importantly, however, women were included in the group of fifty-five students who participated in the dedication and subsequently became the first students to attend KU.

The subject of women's education was discussed at the dedication ceremony in 1866 when S.O. Thacher spoke of education for women in his address to the audience. Specifically, he noted:

As it may be a provision that in the school system of the State the same rights and privileges shall be accorded to both sexes, it follows that the widest avenues to female education will be afforded in the State University. It may be deemed an experiment, but it is one whose result is certain. Wherever the barriers of female education have been removed, good, and not evil has been the result. It seems to be a well recognized truth that the real advancement of man, his highest development, is in the ratio of opportunities for culture given to both sexes.

He went on to say of education for women, and the role of the State to be to:

....yield to her that which our constitution accords in a State University an equal, unfettered chance to develop the powers and facilities God has given her.²

Hannah Oliver described the first student body of KU as not being of college rank. That first year, all students took courses within the preparatory department, however, by 1867, two students were enrolled in the collegiate department.³ In the early years, the student body populations were small and the students knew each other well and developed a strong sense of friendship.

Lizzie (Williams) Smith (class of 1876) described the students who attended KU in the 1860s and early 1870s as coming to the University "with purpose; a purpose to learn all they could, a purpose to fit themselves for life's duties."⁴ She wrote that the young students were earnest, studious, and that the listless, careless student was the exception to the rule.

Carrie Watson (class of 1877), who came to KU in 1870 as a member of the preparatory department, recalled a college life where "teachers were friends — friends teachers."⁵ She further wrote that the classes were small and thus all classmates became friends. During her time as a student at KU, Watson was a member of the Orophilian Literary Society, which she said of this association:

....I enjoyed the intellectual exercises of the Orophilian literary society. Two literary societies held forth at this time — the Orophilian and the Oread. These societies were the principal channels of social intercourse and a wholesome outlet for college spirit. One may wonder how a literary society could furnish amusement, but it did.⁶

L.D. Tosh (class of 1873) entered KU in 1870 as a transfer student from Miami University. Mr. Tosh later recalled how, upon his arrival at KU, he had to get accustomed to the women students. He wrote:

The feminine element had been unknown to me in collegiate life. It was apparent that the large majority of the young women were there with the single purpose of mental improvement, and they readily held their own

in the classrooms and literary societies, successfully demonstrating the equality of the sexes in the realm of the mind, and the wisdom of coeducation.⁷

Florence (Finch) Kelly, who attended KU from 1877 to 1881, recalled her college experiences in her autobiography, *Flowing Stream*. She wrote of close associations with Professors F.H. Snow, James Canfield, and Kate Stephens, all of whom were given some credit for her achievements at KU and intellectual growth. Moreover, of her life at KU and coeducation, Florence Kelly wrote:

In my youth coeducation was very generally frowned upon, not only in educational circles but also by general opinion. And the much broader and more basic question of higher education of women was battling its way toward recognition against tremendous odds...But the young University of Kansas, so young, so small, so poor, dauntlessly took its stand, as did most of the land grant colleges, with the forces of progress, and from its first day gave the girls sincere and cordial welcome and equal advantages — which is not wholly true of some of the other institutions of that class. Both boys and girls, almost without exception — but not quite — were zestful in their work and eager to take advantage of every opportunity for mental enlightenment, advancement and enrichment.⁸

Of the extracurricular opportunities, Florence Kelly wrote of the influence of the two literary societies; the popularity of fraternities and sororities; and the clubs devoted to literature, foreign language, and music. The influence that the extracurricular opportunities played in Florence Kelly's life and career -- as a prominent author and journalist who worked with several newspapers, including 30 years with the *New York Times Book Review* -- is exemplified in the manner she spoke of this in her autobiography:

As my college years flew by, it seemed to me, on wings of wind, I held steadily to my purpose of becoming a writer of fiction and, perhaps, of other things as well. The work I was doing in many of my classes, in the literary society to which I belonged and as one of the editors of our student magazine all gave me much exercise in various kinds of writing, and in all of it I took much pleasure.⁹

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

KU's literary society movement began with the founding of the Acropolis Society in 1866. However, in 1870 the male students took control and renamed it the Orophilian Literary Society; they also excluded female students from its membership.¹⁰ In response to this, the female students began the Oread Literary Society; Hannah Oliver and Maggie Herrington were on the committee which drafted the organization's first constitution and important members in the Oread Society.¹¹ Due to competition for members, the Orophilian Society soon began accepting women students as members and both organizations became popular student clubs in the 1870s. The only provision for membership into the literary societies was that members were required to pay an entrance fee, and once these organizations were initiated and their memberships increased, women were included in all aspects of club affairs. The programs of their events and notices in the student newspapers show women student members involved in the many components of their programs — from debate and oration to musical performance.

In the 1870s, only a few extracurricular clubs were mentioned in the newspapers, yearbooks, and student reminiscences; within the club system, the literary societies clearly dominated the field. These societies were important in that they gave student an opportunity to develop intellectually and, as noted earlier in a commentary by Carrie Watson, were the main source of social activity for the students.

The literary societies probably benefited from the lack of established Greek and athletics organizations at KU. During the 1870s, organized athletics was not yet popular, and the Greek social system had established only four chapters on the campus -- Beta Theta Pi chapter for men and I.C. Sorosis (later Pi Beta Phi) for women were chartered in 1872;

Phi Kappa Psi was chartered in 1876 and a Kappa Alpha Theta chapter for KU women was chartered in 1877. Consequently, the dominating social element for the students in the 1870s was the literary societies. Membership records show that the two societies had large membership bases and were quite popular with the students. The influence these organizations had is exemplified in the student newspapers of the time period which covered much of the events and news related to the societies.

ACADEMIC LIFE AND GRADUATION

In terms of women and their participation within the academic and class realms, women students often were included in officer positions within the classes. The records of 1873 and 1874 show that women were officers of classes within the collegiate department as well as the preparatory division. There was no exclusion of women being presidents or vice presidents of the classes; this is exemplified in the roster from 1874 when Hannah Oliver was Treasurer of the Senior Class and Kate Stephens was President of the Junior Class.¹² Indeed, that particular year women students dominated the class officerships in the preparatory department as well.

Within the collegiate department women were included in the scholastic honors programs as well. Phi Beta Kappa established a chapter at KU in 1874 and in that year there was one induction — Hannah Oliver. The following year, of three inductions, two were women — Alice Boughton and Kate Stephens. Beyond 1875, however, no women were chosen for Phi Beta Kappa until the 1881 school year.¹³

The graduation statistics for the 1870s show women graduating each year within the collegiate division. However in all of these years, most of the women graduated from the division which is now known as the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Throughout the

1870s, the only other divisions showing female and male graduates were: the Graduate School, the School of Engineering, and the Normal Department. Graduation statistics from this time show that women graduated through all existing divisions within the University except the Department of Engineering. Women were not excluded from majoring in Engineering, rather it seems that the women students adhered closely to the liberal arts and teaching majors. Furthermore, throughout the 1870s, the number of women graduates closely coincided with the number of male graduates.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND SPEECHES

Student newspapers and publications from the 1870s provide an idea of how women students were viewed by the campus community, as well as their inclusion in campus life. Not only were women included on the staffs of the student newspapers, the newspapers allowed women to participate by publishing their literary work in addition to publishing articles related to women's issues and women's education and achievement. Much of the content of the early student newspapers was devoted to literary work of the students and the business of the literary societies.

During the 1870s and 1880s, several student newspapers were published at KU, however the primary student publications in the 1870s which focused on the student life, were the *Kansas Collegiate* and the *Kansas Review*. Both of these publications allowed women students on their staffs; published articles and essays written by women students; and discussed issues related to women's rights and education.

As early as 1875, the issue of female suffrage was discussed in the student newspapers. One mention of suffrage came in the October 26, 1875 edition of the *Kansas Collegiate* when Mr. W.H. Carruth, then a student at KU, wrote an article in response to a piece

published in *Scribner's* the previous March. The author of the *Scribner's* article discussed how women in Wyoming had been given the right to vote, and of how he thought the State should recede its ruling on female suffrage. The author also remarked that the suffrage movement was losing popularity and, eventually, would be forgotten. In response to this article, Carruth wrote an essay in support of women and their rights as citizens. He spoke of how the treatment of women and the denial of allowing women to vote was similar to slavery:

Woman does not kneel to man supplicating a privilege, she meets him face to face and demands a right. It matters not if evils remain unreformed, yea, even if they increase, if political institutions fail, and the heavens fall by the change, woman demands emancipation from a slavery, enforced by those who are often her inferiors in all things good.

Carruth went on to respond to the assertion that the female suffrage movement was losing support:

....it is constantly gaining supporters from all ranks and especially from the educated and liberal scholars of the country. May the twentieth century never dawn upon a Republic in which a woman can say "I am a slave."¹⁴

The female suffrage movement also attracted the attention of the literary societies; in December of 1875 the *Kansas Collegiate* noted that the Orophilian Literary Society had planned its schedule for the coming term and one of the debate topics was "female suffrage would prove injury to society."¹⁵

The subject of women in politics was mentioned in the September 1880 edition of the *Kansas Review* when the paper published an article about a Lawrence woman, Miss Sarah Brown, who had been nominated for the position of State Superintendent by the Democratic Convention. The article was written in response to a *Kansas City Times* piece which attacked the nomination of Miss Brown. The student newspaper responded that the *Times*

had, "made its name a reproach to journalism" by attacking Miss Brown. The *Review's* staff also commented that Miss Brown had earned the support of scholars as a result of serving as Douglas County's Superintendent in 1878 and thus deserved the nomination. The *Review's* staff went on to say:

The *Times* is one of those newspapers that are continually whining about the loss of the chivalrous respect for women in case they meddle in politics.¹⁶

Articles related to women as students in higher education were published in the student newspapers as well; one such piece was published in the *Kansas Review* in November of 1879. This particular article, written by Florence Finch, discussed the myths related to female education and its negative effects on female health. In the piece, Miss Finch wrote of the common myths related to the deterioration of female health and the supposed role that educating women had with it. This argument was often given by conservatives of the time period as a reason why women should not be allowed to attend college. In response to these unfounded opinions, Miss Finch wrote of how most college women, who had developed problems with their health during their college years, were too socially active in addition to trying to maintain their studies. She encouraged women students to focus more on studies and less on the social aspect of college. She further wrote that the women who suffered from deteriorating health -- because of focusing too much on a college social life -- were creating a bad image for all women trying to earn a college degree. She suggested that most women in college were under much pressure because they usually had to work to pay for school; this she attributed to any decline in women students' health. She ended the piece by writing:

Put a girl through the same course a boy takes and under the same condition, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred she will come out with health relatively as good as his.¹⁷

In looking at the manner in which women students were included in the 1870s, a significant component seems to be within the realm of their publicly expressed opinions related to female education and the role of women in society. In this time period, commencement speeches were a method used to voice these opinions. During the 1870s, the commencement programs show women included within all aspects of the ceremonies; most importantly, however, sometimes women students used commencement speeches in order to discuss women in education and societal roles.

Lizzie Williams gave one of the addresses at the 1876 commencement ceremony; her topic was *The Higher Education of Women*. In her speech, Miss Williams spoke of how, although women were included within higher education across the U.S., conservatives still voiced sentiments against the education of women. Of these people, Miss Williams said:

And there are some conservatives who ever delight in the customs which have prevailed for so long; who are averse to any change; who fear lest by women being highly educated, she will lose her traditional force and manner; who fear lest her nature will thus become masculine and her womanly qualities destroyed. These objectors, either through prejudice or lack of penetration, evidently miss the main issue of the question. All doubts and all questions must be laid aside and regarded as but of little moment when we consider the obligation which rests upon every moral being to become all he has the ability to become, to cultivate every power, physical, mental, and spiritual which is the requirement of God. Must women, gifted with the highest susceptibilities and keenest perceptions, neglect them and treat them as worthless?¹⁸

The *Lawrence Republican Journal*, which printed Miss William's speech, responded by writing:

Miss Williams, leader of the class, as respects grades, is in no wise least as a public speaker.¹⁹

At the 1879 commencement, Belle Stevens spoke on *Women in Political Economy* for her senior oration. In her address, Miss Stevens spoke of the denial of voting rights for women and how receiving such rights could lead to equality within the work realm. She spoke of how women, although equally capable of performing many of the same jobs as

men, were constantly shut out of certain careers or given lower pay for performing the same type of work. In closing Miss Stevens said of women:

Let her become a dentist, printer, engraver, druggist clerk, or bank cashier. In all these let her enter into fair unobstructed competition with man. Let the time speedily come when she will be regarded as important in all branches of learning and industry, as she has hitherto been considered in the home.²⁰

WOMEN GRADUATES OF THE 1870s

Some of the women who graduated from KU in the 1870s remained involved in women's rights issues and KU throughout their careers. Hannah Oliver graduated in 1874, however her time at KU did not end with graduation. In 1890, Miss Oliver became a member of the Latin faculty at KU; she remained at this position until 1931 when she retired and became Professor Emerita.²¹

Carrie Watson (class of 1877) became the Assistant to the Librarian at KU shortly after her graduation. In 1887, Miss Watson was appointed Librarian; she held this position until 1921. Today, the main library on the KU campus is named after Carrie Watson.²²

Lizzie (Williams) Smith, the young woman who gave a speech at the 1876 commencement, married shortly after graduation. However she later returned to KU and received an M.A. in 1906. Through much of her career, she worked as a court reporter for the 34th Judicial District however she also was involved in the women's suffrage movement as a Vice President for the Equal Suffrage Association for the 6th Congressional District.²³

Kate Stephens graduated from KU in 1875 — she was valedictorian of her class. After graduation, Miss Stephens stayed at KU as a graduate student and received an M.A. in June of 1878. In 1879, she joined KU as a faculty member in the Greek Department. Miss Stephens stayed at KU until 1885 when she was dismissed from her position for, what she thought, a disagreement with the administration over her religious ideals. After her

dismissal, she moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts and began a career in journalism. In 1894 Miss Stephens moved to New York City and became involved further with a journalism career. Ultimately, in 1927, she founded *Antigone Press* and published several of her own books. Throughout her career, Miss Stephens remained involved with and promoted the rights of women. In 1894, Miss Stephens returned to Lawrence to speak on women's suffrage, and in 1908 she organized a movement to appoint a woman to the Kansas Board of Regents. In 1911 and 1912 her devotion to the women's suffrage movement had her involved with the Women's Political Union for which she wrote many of the mottoes for the organization's demonstration banners.²⁴

As noted earlier, Florence (Finch) Kelly devoted her career to journalism. Her first newspaper job was with the *Topeka Commonwealth* in the summer of 1880 while she was still a student at KU. After graduation, Florence Kelly went on to work for the *Boston Globe*, and later worked with the *Troy Telegram* in upstate New York, the *San Francisco Examiner*, and the *Los Angeles Times* as a Literary Editor. Florence Kelly ended her career with the *New York Times* where she spent some 30 years on the staff of the *Book Review*.²⁵

SUMMARY OF THE 1870s

The campus climate at KU during its first decade and a half was positive in regards to its women students, their opinions, and overall experience. The student populations were small and women and men students interacted with and supported one another. In addition, KU's women students were given the opportunity to be involved in the many aspects of the extracurricular and academic components. A separate club structure did not exist for women students; they participated in student clubs with male students.

Moreover, unlike many other institutions of higher learning of this time period, women and men students were given the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding women in education and female societal roles.

THE 1880s

As the 1880s began, the extracurricular club and society system remained fairly small in terms of the number of organizations. The Orophilian and Oread Literary Societies maintained their popularity however throughout the decade more student clubs and secret societies were organized and as the 1890s approached, these newly-formed clubs undercut the influence of the literary societies. With the increase in student clubs, the Greek social system grew as well. Throughout the 1880s, five additional chapters were established. Of the five new chapters, only one was for women: Kappa Kappa Gamma. College athletics, although popular on the East coast, had not become established fully at KU — to the dismay of some students. A student newspaper from 1884 remarked:

The interest in athletics is increasing though very far yet from what it should be.²⁶

In the early 1880s, the Greek organizations had their own bands and choirs. The law students also had their own clubs, however since women did not study for law degrees at this time, they were not members of the law clubs. As the decade wore on, more clubs were formed; usually these newly-founded organizations were devoted to a specific subject and served a certain constituency.

LITERARY SOCIETIES WITHIN EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

Throughout the decade, the literary societies went through several stages. In the early 1880s, the societies were still popular organizations on campus, and women students remained an important component of the memberships. In fact, the societies were so popular there was debate regarding their size; an editorial in the *University Courier*, a student newspaper, made note of efforts to control the memberships of the literary societies. Specifically, it wrote of how the Oread Society, in an attempt to control the number of students in its organization, proposed to have members of the preparatory division form a third society. The plan was voted down by the Society's membership, however a third society was formed: The Social Science Club. This organization's purpose was to provide its members with a platform for studying and discussing questions of social science — specifically, it called for debate, essay and oration on subjects related to Political Economy, Social Science, and Mental Philosophy. The club made no mention of excluding women — it was open to "Seniors, Juniors, Third-year Normals, Law Seniors, and Post Graduates."²⁷

Although the literary societies remained influential in the early part of the decade, their focus seemed to be less on literary pursuits and more on internal fighting and control — something which, by the end of the decade, changed the literary societies' influence and, subsequently, their inclusion of women students. It seems that the infighting between its membership was primarily due to the fraternity and sorority members' attempts to exclude the non-Greek students. A student newspaper published an account of how the Greek member students fixed the election of the Oread Literary Society. The newspaper wrote:

The prearranged "slate" of the "big three" carried the day. Although able and deserving non-fraternity members of the Society were placed in nomination, their forces were but pigmies compared to the solid phalanx of the Greeks and their retinue. Many Oreads there were who came expecting to see the exciting scene of last year reenacted, unaware of the true state of affairs; but the sandwiched appearance of the one fraternity with the two ladies secret societies after the election had begun revealed the situation even to the dullest.

The paper went on to say:

The result of this election should be the signal for a revolution in society affairs, for it clearly reveals the fact that the pledges of some secret societies are established facts, and are considered by them as more sacred than the demands of justice. The non-fraternity members of the society have shown themselves ever willing to give secret societies a fair representation, but the favor has seldom been reciprocated.²⁸

By 1884 there was even some question as to whether the Greek system would replace the literary societies. *The University Courier* discussed the trouble of the literary societies:

It has been a year of revival in college spirit, of enterprise in college journalism, of warfare and strife in the literary societies. It is becoming a question whether the fraternities will displace the open literary societies, as in most eastern colleges, or whether the two will continue to exist side by side, each in its proper field.²⁹

The strife within the literary societies affected their women members -- sometimes positively and sometimes not. In the elections of 1884, women students were elected as officers of the Oread Literary Society. *The Weekly University Courier* wrote:

The Oread Society has young ladies for officers. During the past year the boys have been running the machine -- and have almost run it aground. The young ladies are called upon to help, and are responding nobly.³⁰

In the December 12 newspaper, a notice was published related to the Orophilian Society elections -- all the officer positions went to male students. One week later, the Oread Society won a literary contest against the Orophilians.³¹

The dissension within the literary societies did not dissipate and, by 1888, the Oread Society was defunct. The Orophilian Society was still on campus and a new society -- the

Athenaeum Literary Society -- had formed; both organizations included women within their memberships. Additionally, by 1887 several other new student groups had been added. After these changes occurred within the literary society system, the notices listed in the student newspapers showed fewer women students involved in their programs and events. An October 19, 1888 notice for an Orophilian Society program listed no women students as participants.³²

Interestingly enough, as women students came to be included less within the literary societies and their programs, criticism related to the quality of their programs was voiced. *The University Times* wrote of the literary programs:

It is strange how blind some of the members of the literary societies are. The programs are posted on the bulletin board, whereby they pass them every day, and yet when Friday night comes, they are not prepared, giving as an excuse, many times, ignorance of their being on the program. The societies cannot be made interesting with such persons as members. If a person does not expect to be an active member, let him stay out and not be a drag to the society. It is a shame that some are run into the societies for no reason it seems than political purposes. Let every member open his eyes, and come up Friday night prepared to do his part and our societies will not languish.³³

By February 1890, the student newspaper described the Orophilian and Athenaeum Literary Societies as "semi-defunct." Infighting between non-fraternity and fraternity students and the possible formation of another literary society were the reasons given for the demise of these organizations. The Orophilian and Athenaeum Literary Societies were asked to dissolve and give their property to a newly-founded organization: The Adelphic Literary Society. A student newspaper wrote that the members of the two dissolved societies could become members in the Adelphic Society. Most importantly, however, of the committee charged with forming and operating the new society, only male students were listed.³⁴

As the 1890s approached, women students no longer played a prominent role within the literary societies at KU which, for the most part, had lost much of their influence within the student organization/club structure.

GREEK AND ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS

Although the Greek social system did not experience large increases in terms of the number of chapters formed at KU in the 1880s, their prominence among students grew during the decade. Membership was esteemed by the students and, as can be seen by the strife within the literary societies, the Greek chapters strove to dominate the club system at KU. In the early 1880s, the Greek houses formed clubs among themselves; they had coeducational bands and choirs, in addition to boating clubs. However, as the decade wore on, their prominence on campus and their role in campus activities and politics increased; they eventually controlled some of the student newspapers and yearbooks published in this decade. Further, they seemed to encourage the dissension among the fraternity and non-fraternity students on campus.

College athletics also increased in status during the 1880s. In the early years of the decade, athletics was only mentioned in terms of its popularity at eastern colleges. However, by 1884 there was mention in the student newspaper of forming an athletic association and as the 1890s approached more articles and columns related to college sports were included in the student newspapers. By 1888, a newspaper wrote that college baseball was "very popular."³⁵ At the end of the baseball season that year, the newspaper lamented about what could take its place:

Now that the baseball season is over, K.S.U. students should turn their attention to something to take its place. Many substitutes might be mentioned, but probably the most practical is football. It is understood that several of our neighboring colleges have football teams and if K.S.U. would organize a team, we might have some exciting contests before winter is over. Each of the classes might get a team and have some inter-class games. Or, each of the fraternities might have a fraternity team, and play inter-fraternity games.³⁶

(The name for KU at this time was Kansas State University - K.S.U.)

By 1888, KU had an established Baseball Association; a Football Association was formed in 1889. With the formal establishment of collegiate athletics, the opportunities for men clearly outnumbered those for women students. Over the decade, the male students had a variety of sports from which to choose: baseball, football, track and field, boating, and tennis. According to the newspapers and yearbooks, the opportunities for women students were sporadic at best and consisted of tennis and boating which were offered on and off throughout the decade.³⁷

ACADEMICS, HONORS, AND GRADUATION

Officer positions within the classes were filled by women students throughout the 1880s. The most prominent school year for women students in this realm was 1882-1883 when women students were Presidents of all four classes -- Ada Briggs for the Seniors, Lida Romig for the Juniors, Nellie Griswold for the Sophomores, and Evelyne Smith for the Freshman class.³⁸ However for the remainder of the decade, women students primarily were seen in the secretary/treasurer/prophet roles within the classes.

The representation of women in scholastic honors during the 1880s was moderate. In terms of Phi Beta Kappa, women students were included on the lists for Phi Beta Kappa recipients in seven of the ten years. In addition, the percentage of women

receiving the award increased; by the 1888-1889 school year, of six students chosen, three were women. It was not until the school year of 1900-1901 that the percentage of women students began to outnumber men in this area.³⁹ A noticeable change also occurred in the percentage of women graduating from KU. In the 1880s, the ratio was approximately 2 to 1 (134 women and 293 men), as opposed to the equality of these numbers in the 1870s. Furthermore, representation of women in the professional schools was almost non-existent.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND SPEECHES

The content of the student newspapers in the 1880s tended to remain positive toward women students and women's issues. Throughout the decade, there were many notations related to coeducation at the higher education level. Moreover, women were represented on the staffs of the competing student newspapers, which continued to publish articles and essays written about and by women. Of coeducation, the newspapers wrote:

The subject of coeducation has of late been much discussed at Wabash College, but unfortunately we think, the directors have finally decided against it.⁴⁰

The principle of coeducation is gaining ground in spite of old fogysm of some would-be "conservatives." Wabash will receive young ladies next year.⁴¹

Coeducation is gaining ground both east and west. With coeducational institutions as Cornell and Ann Arbor, there is little room for complaint from the fair sex. If Vassar and Smith will only admit gentlemen in the near future how nice it will be. We fear, however, that the great ladies' schools on the banks of the Hudson will ever remain such. Too bad!⁴²

Newspapers also covered the news related to the achievements of KU alumnae. In 1883, the *University Courier* wrote:

Miss Florence Finch has accepted an invitation to read a paper before the South Boston club, her subject being, *Women in American Politics*.⁴³

The *University News* made note of Florence Finch's move from the *Boston Globe* to a newspaper in Troy, New York — to become Managing Editor. The paper wrote:

Probably Kansas furnishes the first woman in the United States who technically and really is the managing editor of a daily newspaper.⁴⁴

However, some dichotomy did exist in relation to women and their role in society and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. The *University Courier* wrote:

.....as coeducation and women-suffrage are making much rapid strides, and we must be nothing if not consistent, no doubt the young ladies will soon agitate their tender minds with grave and awful questions of state. But here arises another difficulty. What if the noble Senior and his best girl, his particular affinity, get opposite sides of the political fence, — we shudder to think upon it.⁴⁵

Throughout the 1880s, the student newspapers published many essays about women in education and society. In 1884, the *Courier* published an essay entitled: *Some Talk About Woman's Education*. In the essay, the author made note of the conservative arguments against education for women: That women were intellectually inferior to men; their health was too delicate to withstand the rigors of higher education; and that they could not effectively learn math and science. The author, in response to these opinions, wrote of women students and the lack of science in their course work and the focus on domestic knowledge:

.....frequently a knowledge of domestic economy is the only science a girl is encouraged to pursue. The common services of life are not trivial, and on them depend many things of greater moment, but it seems a little unjust that women should monopolize them.⁴⁶

In reviewing the yearbooks and newspapers of this time period, it is apparent that the students sometimes viewed coeducation in terms of socializing with members of the opposite sex. Through the 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s, there were many articles in student publications which focused on dating and relationships among the students. One such article wrote of women and men students and allowing them the freedom to interact with one another:

In all our schools all over the land, the custom of keeping the sexes so strictly separated is fast disappearing, and we see more schools with both sexes enjoying the full social privileges of men and women. This is part of our education.⁴⁷

In regards to opportunities given to women students at KU, Nellie Thacher wrote an essay in response to a speech given to the Paola, Kansas Science Club. In the address, the speaker was critical of how KU's women students were underrepresented at class day and commencement activities. Specifically, the speaker noted that, although there were 11 women and 10 men in the class of 1886, only one woman participated in commencement activities. To this criticism, Miss Thacher responded:

The higher education of women is a subject which of late years has awakened an interest quite new and suggestive. The Good Fathers of Kansas were among the first to determine that their daughters should have all the privileges accorded their sons, and opened the doors of every institution of learning in the state, at once to boys and girls alike. The generous interest they exhibited has never flagged and its effect is manifest, not only in perfect equality of opportunity offered to the girls, but in the sympathy with their success and the solitude for their profiting by these advantages, evinced by the women of our state.⁴⁸

In response to the speaker's assertion that representation of female students at commencement should increase in proportion to their percentage within the classes, Miss Thacher noted that representation was based on academic performance, not percentages.

She believed women students should earn their right to participate in commencement ceremonies. She ended the piece by commenting:

Let it never be said that we bartered our rights by begging for our privileges as women!⁴⁹

There were some changes in the 1880s within the realm of female participation at commencement. Most notably, the subject of their orations focused less on women and education, and more on literature and the arts. Throughout the decade, however, there were some women students who continued to discuss women and education -- in 1885 Ada Briggs gave an oration on *Educational Progress*; Hattie Dunn spoke on the topic of *Woman's Influence* in 1886; *Women and Her Era* was the topic of Mary Rice's oration in 1887; and in 1888, Adelia May Churchill gave an oration on *The Theory and Place of the State University*.⁵⁰

At the Commencement of 1890, Nettie Delilah Goodell gave an oration on *The Intellectual Development of Women*. The *Lawrence Daily Journal* wrote of Miss Goodell's speech:

She showed how for centuries the women were mere drudges but as the race rose in the scale of civilization woman was advanced to a higher position. The elevation was much slower than that of man but the higher he rose the better he seemed to realize the rights of women. Women have never been slow to take advantage of opportunities for advancement offered them, and in almost every instance she has justified her claims made for her by her friends that she is equal to her brother when placed in like circumstances. "Mankind" the speaker declared, "as a whole, cannot advance unless there advances not one half, but two halves together." The oration was a strong plea for better advantages and higher intellectual development of women.⁵¹

SUMMARY OF THE 1880s

In the 1880s, the campus climate at KU witnessed the increased influence and popularity of college sports and the Greek social system, however it also was a time of

continued support for women students and their endeavors and opinions. It was a decade that saw the fall of the two esteemed and established literary societies on campus -- organizations which were a popular form of extracurricular involvement for women students in pursuit of more academic and literary achievement. Consequently, with the fall of these societies and the establishment of more student clubs, women students seemed to be involved less as participants and more as spectators -- especially within the realm of athletics.

OVERVIEW OF THE 1890s AND EARLY 1900s

During the 1890s, the club system at KU continued to flourish -- especially for male students. Throughout this decade, male students had many clubs from which to choose; most of which excluded women as members. However, there were clubs founded for women students exclusively -- The Young Women's Christian Association was founded in 1886;⁵² in 1892 the Women's League was established; the Equal Suffrage League was founded in 1909; and the Women's Student Government Association began in 1910.⁵³ Although women had clubs which they could join, the opportunities for male students outnumbered those available to female students. The yearbooks from the 1890s and early 1900s provide a glimpse of the student clubs in this time period. Of some 22 clubs listed in the 1892-93 yearbook, 15 listed only male student members or had only males in the club photo; 3 clubs listed only female members; and 4 clubs had open membership.⁵⁴ Women students were excluded from some of the literary and debating societies as well. The Snow Literary Society, which was established in 1897, excluded women in its first year. However, in 1898 the club chose to include women students in its membership in an attempt to

keep the organization going. The yearbook wrote of this:

During the winter of 1898, when the organization was at its lowest ebb, whenever one of the faithful few was given an extempore his subject was always, "How can we build up our society?" and his text stated with much emphasis, "I tell you, what we want is the girls." We are happy to say that we got them.⁵⁵

Although women still were included on the staffs of the newspapers, they seemed to be assigned to the position of Society Columnist or within the literary staff. Probably the most noticeable difference in the representation of women and men students was in relation to graduation statistics. This difference grew wider in the 1890s; in this decade, male graduates outnumbered women by approximately a 4 to 1 ratio. In the 1890s, 265 women and 983 men graduated from KU. Male students dominated the professional schools' enrollments in the 1890s as well.

The yearbooks of the 1890s and early 1900s provide some sense as to how women students were viewed during this time. The yearbooks frequently described Senior women students in terms of physical attractiveness:

"Her very frowns are fairer far than smiles of other maidens are" *for Issie Potts*.⁵⁶
"Her bright smile haunts me still" *for Stella Gallup*.⁵⁷

And of a woman student who received a Phi Beta Kappa key, the description creates some question as to whether female intelligence was valued at this time:

"So wise, so young, they say do never live long" *for Leora Crawford*.⁵⁸

There also seemed to be some change in the attitude related to women and their role in society, as was noted by a description written for the Law School in the 1899 yearbook:

Mothers, whose mission is the holiest of the holy, have left their children and husbands, broken up the domestic circle, made desolate homes that were once made secure by a mother's vigilant protection and cooking, transformed them into bachelors' dens of chaos and confusion, to cast their lots among the obstreperous "Laws of '99," in order that they might make of themselves Susan B. Anthonys, mingle with political Shylocks and ward-heelers, and wrest from them the ballot and place it in the hands of themselves and their kind.

Wives, young and ambitious as Caesar, but too timid to face the world alone, have taken their husbands by the ears and led them from the industrial pursuits of life into the Kansas University Law School, sitting with them during recitation hours in the capacity of coaches, that in after-years they might be encircled by halos of glory which all the world might gaze upon in reverent wonderment; lights so big that they could not put them under a bushel if they wanted to.⁵⁹

The School of Medicine, in its 1903 yearbook description, wrote:

Practically all the students in this school were young men. There was but one young lady entered this year; she was always more or less of a mystery to all who came in contact with her. She never revealed her full name, and was known simply as Mary. She never revealed her home town, presumably to avoid paying tuition, though probably to deceive her parents, for we understand they never knew of her sojourn in the University. Though her heart was in the work, yet she did not have the proper spirit; she wasted away in attempting to maintain the awful pace set by Schaeffer and Baxter, and at the end of three months completely disappeared in a cloud of mystery.⁶⁰

In contrast to the 1870s and 1880s support of female suffrage, the 1909 yearbook described the Equal Suffrage League, a student club organized by women students interested in promoting female suffrage, as:

"A band of women clubbed together to show that they ought to be men."⁶¹

Although the attitude toward women students at KU from 1890 to the early 1900s cannot be viewed as being entirely supportive, the initial years of the University's history through the end of the 1880s proved to be accepting and supportive of its women students.

At the commencement of 1890, F.H. Snow, then Chancellor of KU, offered the following commentary related to how the University viewed women and coeducation:

At a time when even in the west co-education in institutions of collegiate rank was considered to be a dangerous experiment, the Legislature of Kansas decided that in her University the young women should have the same advantages as the young men; and the University faculty have never introduced, nor even discussed the introduction of a modified curriculum for the so-called weaker sex. As convincing evidence that this experiment has become a pronounced success, and has not interfered with the natural employments of women, I will refer to Mr. Wilson Sterling's Alumni Catalogue, from which it appears that an astonishing large portion of our women graduates are engaged in domestic duties, and at the same time are making themselves known in the domain of literature, science, and the arts. The Trustees of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Princeton, Williams, and many other high-grade Eastern colleges still regard the simple agitation of the subject of co-education as a bomb shell of sufficient size and force to threaten the disruption of the educational body-politic. But this great question of women's equal educational privileges was settled once and for all a quarter of a century ago at the Kansas University.⁶²

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH

Based on the research presented, the questions for this topic can be reviewed and a comparison to other colleges during this time period drawn.

How can membership of KU's women students in campus organizations be characterized?

In KU's initial years, the student organization system was fairly small in relation to the number of student clubs on campus. Of the clubs, the literary societies were the most popular among the students, and as shown in the research, women were involved in these societies. The role that women students played within these organizations seemed to be all inclusive; they were allowed to perform in all aspects of the societies' programs, as well as serve the organizations in officer roles. Based on student reminiscences from the 1870s and 1880s, the literary society organizations were an important component of extracurricular life in general and for the women students.

The dominance and influence of the literary societies lasted until the mid-1880s when infighting between the fraternity and non-fraternity members began. As a result of this infighting, the formation of other student groups, and the rising popularity of college athletics and fraternity and sorority systems, the literary societies' influence was diminished. Unfortunately, the literary societies seemed to be the foremost extracurricular

activity in which women students became involved. With the demise of the older literary societies on campus, similar societies were formed in the late 1880s. Most importantly, however, women students did not seem to be included in the new literary societies to the extent that they had been in the 1870s and early 1880s. In addition, during the latter portion of the 1880s, the student club system grew and of the newly-formed clubs, the yearbooks show there were more male clubs which tended to exclude women -- especially within the realm of debate and politics (KU Debate, Republican and Democrat Clubs, etc.).

After the demise of the literary societies in the 1880s, women students still were involved in the club system, however the clubs they joined were within the area of languages and the arts (French, German, and drama). This decrease in female student involvement may be attributed to the fact that the male students so greatly outnumbered women students on campus in the 1880s and 1890s.

In comparing the experience women students at KU had within the student organization system to women students at other colleges, KU seemed to be more progressive in this area -- especially in looking at the 1870s and first half of the 1880s. Women students did not need to organize their own clubs separate from the men students, rather they participated in the same clubs. Moreover, there is no evidence related to women being assigned to specific officer positions within the student organizations.

What fields of study did women students at KU pursue? Were there some fields of study closed to women students?

Based on graduation records, women students graduated through most of the academic branches during the time period of 1866 to 1890 -- the College of Liberal Arts and

Sciences, Graduate School, School of Fine Arts, School of Pharmacy, and the Normal Department. Women students were allowed to attend classes with the male students and take course work within all divisions of the University. However, it seems that women students adhered closely to the liberal arts as opposed to scientific degrees such as engineering. Women did not graduate from the professional schools --Law, Medicine, and Pharmacy -- until the 1890s and early 1900s. There is no evidence to suggest that KU faculty or administrators discouraged women students from pursuing certain areas of study, however there may have been some student pressure. This is exemplified by the yearbook notes from the Law and Medical Schools in the early 1900s. In the early years of KU's history, however, these types of student remarks were not found in the research.

Within the academic realm, it seems that women students at KU were not excluded from academic honors such as Phi Beta Kappa during the 1870s and 1880s. Although women were not chosen every year during this time period, the percentage of women students receiving the award increased with time; by the early 1900s women students began to outnumber men in this area even though they were the minority on campus.

In comparing this to women students at other colleges, women students at KU took their classes with the male students, which contrasts with what occurred at other schools. For example, Wisconsin had segregated classrooms until 1877.⁶³ Additionally, women students at KU were allowed to serve at any officer position within the classes, as well as in student clubs and organizations.

To what extent did treatment, by KU administrators and faculty, of female students differ from that of male students?

There is not much documentation for this question, however based on student reminiscences from the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, it seems that women students at KU received much of the same treatment as male students. Of the speeches by KU administrators during this time, the attitude toward women students and coeducation in general was positive. At KU's first commencement (in 1873), the Chancellor, John Fraser, spoke of his initial reservations regarding coeducation. He did so as he was presenting a diploma to Flora Richardson:

....the Chancellor said he had come to Kansas -- a disbeliever in the joint and equal education of the sexes. He had been convinced of his error; in his own words, "I came, I saw and was conquered." He wished woman to enjoy all the advantages her head and heart needed and deserved. He paid high compliment to Miss Richardson as a student. This little speech was interrupted by frequent applause, which was especially hearty at the mention of Miss Richardson.⁶⁴

However, there is no evidence showing that some of KU's chancellors or faculty responded negatively to coeducation and women students, as was the case at the Universities of California and Michigan. Based on Chancellor Snow's remarks from the 1890 commencement, it can be said that coeducation was accepted by the administration, and alumnae were encouraged to pursue careers within all spectrums of society.

What was the overall campus climate toward women students and their activities and studies at KU?

During the time period of focus, 1866 - 1890, the experience for women students at KU was positive; women students were allowed to become active in the extracurricular

life at KU -- particularly the literary societies. Based on student newspapers of the time period, it seems that KU's students were aware that other colleges did not provide their women students with the same privileges or access the male students received; to these reports the student newspapers responded negatively. In the early years when coeducation was mentioned, it was in a positive voice with a stress toward giving women the rights they deserved. However, it seems that as the 1900s approached, the view of coeducation at KU, although still viewed in a positive context, had less to do with the advancement of women and their rights to an equal education, and more with its positive correlation to dating and establishing relationships while in college.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the student newspapers included women on their staffs, published articles written by women students and about the rights of women. The articles and notations tended to react positively on the subjects of female voting rights, coeducation, and women in society. The papers also published accounts of alumnae who had earned special achievements in their careers. Further, based on the speeches given by women students, the climate seemed to be one in which women students could voice their beliefs regarding women in education and societal roles.

In comparing this overall positive attitude to other colleges, it seems that KU was rather progressive for its time; the only comparison within this positive context is the University of Chicago which was founded some twenty-six years after KU. Moreover, at Chicago, the female students had a separate club structure, unlike KU which had an open student club system for much of the first two decades. Additionally, unlike other schools where the male students openly opposed their women students -- such as the University of California-Berkeley or University of Michigan -- the male students at KU accepted

women and participated with them in the extracurricular life in the 1870s and 1880s. As mentioned earlier, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz wrote that in the late 1800s, women students at coeducational schools were treated as outsiders by the male students; at KU, which began as a coeducational institution, this was not the case from 1866 to 1890.

CONCLUSION

For the most part, the experience of women students at KU from 1866 to 1890 can be viewed as positive. Because the State Constitution and University Charter called for equal education for both women and men, women were allowed to attend KU from the beginning. Throughout the first decade and a half of KU's history, women students were very involved in the extracurricular club structure, which consisted of only a few student organizations. Within this club structure, the literary societies played a prominent role. Women students participated with male students, and through their involvement in these societies, women were included in all aspects of the organizations' programs and events. Women students also served as officers of these clubs during this time.

Likewise, the student journalism movement at KU involved women students. Women were included on the staffs of the student publications, in addition to contributing essays to the newspapers. During the 1870s and 1880s, the newspapers also published many articles and essays in support of women in higher education, women's rights, and women in society.

Furthermore, the women students of the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s were allowed to publicly voice their opinions about women in society and education -- this is exemplified in the commencement speeches given by women students during this time period. In these decades, male students at KU seemed to support women in education and exhibited

positive attitudes about their female counterparts. They often supported women's advancement in society and voiced opposition to the separatist policies of other colleges and universities.

In this time, women students also participated in the classes and academics. It seems that there were no restrictions barring women students from pursuing certain areas of study or attending classes with male students. Women were allowed to serve at all levels within the structure of class officerships, and academic honors, such as Phi Beta Kappa, were open to women students as well.

However, throughout the latter portion of the 1880s, some changes occurred. Women were seen fewer times as presidents of the classes and more in the secretary/treasurer capacity. As more student organizations were founded -- especially Greek social and athletic organizations -- the literary societies lost much of their influence. In addition, infighting within the literary societies undercut much of their prominence. With the demise of the literary societies and formation of other student groups, women seemed to be involved less. While it cannot be proven that the decrease in female participation was caused by the fall of the literary societies, the increase in popularity of college sports and Greek organizations, or the extraordinary difference in the number of women students as opposed to male students on campus, the changes in women student involvement clearly coincided with these events. In the 1890s and early 1900s, women students and their role were viewed somewhat differently; although the attitude was still positive, the male students focused more on the positive social aspect of having women on campus than of women's achievement in education. During this time as well, the opportunities for male students within the student club structure and campus life outnumbered those for women students.

Although the research did not uncover a specific reason as to why women students seemed to be included and given a platform to voice their opinions in the initial years of KU's history, there was, indeed, a positive attitude toward KU's women students in the 1870s and 1880s. Furthermore, although the research provides evidence of a decline in relation to the inclusion of women and the advancement in the opportunities for male students from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s, there were no specific reasons uncovered as to why this occurred. However several events occurred during this time which may have assisted with this downward trend: Female students became the minority on campus; college athletics and the Greek social system became quite popular; and the literary societies (which were a popular form of involvement for women students in the 1870s and 1880s) lost much of their prominence.

However, KU in its first twenty-four years was a fairly progressive and positive college in regards to its women students, their opinions and achievements. Through looking at early publications, it is apparent that KU's administration, faculty, and students were aware of how fragile and new the issue of educating women at the university level was. Moreover, it seems that in the early years, they took this responsibility very seriously. In the end, this related to a positive experience for women who attended KU from 1866 to 1890.

APPENDIX A
GRADUATION STATISTICS

1870s	<u># of women</u>	<u># of men</u>
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	20	24
School of Engineering	0	4
School of Fine Arts	0	0
Normal Department	13	4
Graduate School	2	4
Law School	0	0
Pharmacy	0	0
TOTALS	35	36

1880s		
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	72	104
School of Engineering	0	16
School of Fine Arts	6	1
Normal Department	43	28
Graduate School	12	22
Law School	0	85
Pharmacy	1	37
TOTALS	134	293

1890s		
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	171	300
School of Engineering	0	80
School of Fine Arts	49	2
Normal Department	0	0
Graduate School	23	63
Law School	10	410
Pharmacy	12	128
TOTALS	265	983

(Obtained from *Summary of Degrees Granted 1873 to Present* -- University Archives, Spencer Library, University of Kansas).

NOTES

Cover: Property of the University Archives, Spencer Research Library - KU. Photo from the 1870s. Included by row, from left to right: Front Row - Ned Stephens; Second Row - May Harris, Kate Stephens; Third Row - H.S. Tremper, Dolly Campbell; Back Row - Grace Scoullar, Ed Bancroft.

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